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NODIS

FOR HOUGHTON AND MACK ONLY FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, LE

SUBJECT:SECOND PHASE OF TALKS WITH CHRISTIANS

1. YOU SHOULD RETURN TO JOUNIEH PROMPTLY AND TALK WITH THE SAME LEADERS AS WELL AS WITH A BROADER SPECTRUM OF SECOND ECHELON PEOPLE. IN TERMS OF MOVING THE CHRISTIANS IN A CONSTRUCTIVE DIRECTION, GEMAYEL AND SARKIS SHOULD BE A PARTICULAR FOCUS OF OUR ATTENTION. REMAIN UP TO A WEEK IF YOU THINK IT USEFUL, THEN RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

2. TELL THE LEADERS THAT YOU HAVE REPORTED YOUR EARLIER DISCUSSIONS TO WASHINGTON AND HAVE RECEIVED IN RESPONSE A NUMBER OF POINTS YOU WANT TO MAKE. YOUR TALKING POINTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

3. TALKING POINTS:

-- YOU SHOULD REITERATE THE POINT THAT THE U.S. CONTINUES

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TO SUPPORT A SOLUTION THAT WILL PRESERVE THE INDEPENDENCE

AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON, AND ITS NATIONAL UNITY AND COHESION. WE DO NOT ACCEPT THE ARGUMENT, MADE BY SOME AMONG THE CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP, THAT THE U.S. HAS BEEN DISINTERESTED IN LEBANON AND IN THE WELFARE OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. THE WEAKNESS OF THE CHRISTIANS IN

THE EARLY SPRING WAS A SOURCE OF GREAT CONCERN TO US. WE HAVE BEEN GRATIFIED TO SEE THE STRENGTHENING OF THE CHRISTIAN SIDE OVER THE SUCCEEDING PERIOD. THIS INCREASE IN STRENGTH AND IMPROVEMENT IN POSITION REFLECTED OUR INTEREST IN THE WELL-BEING OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND WAS ATTRIBUTABLE IN SOME MEASURE TO U.S. POLICIES AND ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CONFLICT IN THAT PERIOD. (YOU WILL WANT TO HANDLE THIS CAREFULLY AND ONLY WITH THE PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP, BUT WE WANT TO GET ACROSS THE POINT THAT WE WERE NOT STANDING BY INDIFFERENTLY DURING THE PERIOD OF CHRISTIAN DIFFICULTIES AND THAT WE PLAYED A ROLE, THOUGH INDIRECT, IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN POSITION.)

-- THE CHRISTIANS HAVE NOW ACHIEVED A POSITION OF MUCH GREATER SECURITY AND STRENGTH VIS-A-VIS THEIR OPPONENTS. WE NEVERTHELESS SEE TWO IMPORTANT DANGERS: IF THE PRESENT DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY PERSISTS, IN THE ABSENCE OF A SETTLEMENT, THE PORTION THAT IS UNDER THE CONTROL OF NEITHER CHRISTIANS NOR SYRIANS COULD IN TIME BECOME RADICALIZED UNDER PLO DOMINANCE; AND SECONDLY, THE BALANCE AMONG THE ARAB ELEMENTS MAY WELL NOT REMAIN AS IT IS AND COULD CHANGE TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF THE CHRISTIANS.

-- THERE IS, ON THE OTHER HAND, GROWING CRITICISM IN THE ARAB WORLD OF THE PALESTINIAN ROLE IN THE LEBANESE CIVIL CONFLICT AND THE LEBANESE MOSLEMS APPEAR TO BE INCREASINGLY DISINCLINED TO CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE. THERE ARE ALSO INDICATIONS THAT AT LEAST SOME AMONG THE PALESTINIAN LEADERS ARE PREPARED FOR MAJOR COMPROMISE. THE CHRISTIANS, MOREOVER, HAVE ACHIEVED IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE THROUGH THEIR RECENT VICTORIES OVER THE PALESTINIANS.

-- THIS ADVANTAGEOUS SITUATION MAY WELL NOT LAST. IN
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SUCH A CONFLICT PALESTINIANS ARE BEING RESUPPLIED. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ARAB WORLD OR IN SYRIA COULD TURN THE COURSE OF EVENTS AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS.

WITH RESPECT TO THE SOVIET ROLE (ABOUT WHICH SARKIS INQUIRED), WE BELIEVE MOSCOW WANTS TO SUPPORT THE LEBANESE LEFT AND THE PLO, BUT IT ALSO WISHES TO MAINTAIN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SYRIA. THE SOVIETS HAVE IN RECENT

WEEKS ATTEMPTED TO PRESS THE SYRIANS TO WITHDRAW

FROM LEBANON, BUT SO FAR AS WE KNOW THEY HAVE TAKEN NO ACTION BEYOND THAT WITH DAMASCUS. THEY PROVIDE ARMS TO THE PALESTINIANS AND THE LEFT, BUT ONLY INDIRECTLY THROUGH OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES. WE ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THE SOVIET ROLE IN LEBANON, BUT WE MUST IN ALL FRANKNESS SAY THAT IF THEY PROLONG INDEFINITELY THEIR PRESSURE ON SYRIA AND THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIANS, THIS COULD HAVE ITS EFFECT ON THE SITUATION.

-- WE ARE PREPARED TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TO SEEK A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT ON THE BASIS OF THE JANUARY/FEBRUARY PRINCIPLES AND WITH A RESTRICTED ROLE FOR THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON ALONG THE LINES OF THE CAIRO ACCORDS, PERHAPS IN CONNECTION WITH THE INSTALLATION OF SARKIS AS PRESIDENT ON SEPTEMBER 23. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED SYRIAN EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT A POLITICAL SOLUTION, AND WE WOULD BE WILLING TO USE OUR INFLUENCE WITH KEY GOVERNMENTS AT THIS POINT TO BACK MOVES IN LEBANON TO BRING THE FIGHTING TO AN END AND NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT.

-- WE WILL BE PREPARED, MOREOVER, AFTER A LEBANESE SOLUTION IS REACHED, TO HELP SARKIS AND HIS GOVERNMENT REBUILD LEBANESE INSTITUTIONS AND THE LEBANESE ECONOMY. HOW IT WOULD BE BEST TO DO THIS WE WOULD EXPECT TO CONSIDER TOGETHER WITH SARKIS AT THAT TIME.

-- THE U.S. WILL ALSO BE PREPARED TO PLAY ITS PART IN EQUIPPING A LEBANESE NATIONAL FORCE AFTER THE CONFLICT IS CONCLUDED. MEANWHILE, WE WILL CONTINUE OUR POLICY OF NOT SUPPLYING WEAPONS TO EITHER SIDE, NOR PERMITTING COMMERCIAL SALES. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT WE ARE INDIFFERENT TO

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CHRISTIAN NEEDS, BUT ONLY TO SAY THAT IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF TODAY, IT IS NOT REALISTIC TO EXPECT US TO PROVIDE WEAPONS TO ANY FACTION IN THIS CIVIL CONFLICT.

-- WE CANNOT ESTABLISH A CONTINUOUS DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN JOUNIEH OR EAST BEIRUT WITHOUT GIVING UNACCEPTABLE APPEARANCE OF SUPPORT FOR PARTITION. WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN ACCUSED OF THIS IN CONNECTION WITH THIS CURRENT MISSION. WE DO HOPE TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO TALK WITH YOU AND OF COURSE WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE CONDITIONS RESTORED IN WHICH OUR BEIRUT EMBASSY OFFICIALS CAN REESTABLISH NORMAL CONTACTS.

-- (FOR THOSE WHO HAVE INQUIRED) WITH RESPECT TO OUR RECEPTION IN WASHINGTON OF VISITING CHRISTIAN LEADERS,

WE DO NOT WANT TO REPLY IN THE ABSTRACT TO POSSIBLE
FUTURE VISIT PROPOSALS. WE WOULD CERTAINLY TRY TO BE
HOSPITABLE. NEEDLESS TO SAY, AN ENVOY FROM SARKIS, ONCE

HE IS INSTALLED AS PRESIDENT, WILL BE APPROPRIATELY AND
WARMLY RECEIVED.

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO ELICIT REACTION OF INTERLOCUTORS TO
THESE PREPOSITIONS. KISSINGER

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